

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 PM-03 L-02 MBFR-02 SAJ-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 SPC-01

DRC-01 /057 W

----- 007998

R 191800Z SEP 73

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1632

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4390

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12-31-97

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR INFORMATION POLICY AND PRESS LEAKS

REF: (A) USNATO 4262, (B) STATE 181638, (C) STATE 184012

SUMMARY: PERMREPS AT LUNCH SEPTMEBER 18 WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF PRESS LEAKS APPARENTLY EMANATING FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES IN THE U.S. ABOUT ALLIANCE MBFR NEGOTIATING POSITION. THEY CALLED FOR URGENT COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF MBFR INFORMATION POLICY, BEGINNING ON SEPTEMBER 19. NETHERLANDS AND BELGIAN REPS NOTED IMPLICATION IN TOTH ARTICLE THAT U.S. WOULD SEEK U.S. REDUCTIONS IN SECOND PHASE OF MBFR AS WELL AS FIRST PHASE. MCAULIFFE (U.S.) DREW UPON EXISTING GUIDANCE REGARDING BOTH POINTS. END SUMMARY.

1. COUNCIL DEAN DE STAERCCKE INITIATED DISCUSSION OF MBFR PRESS LEAKS AND NATO INFORMATION POLICY AT SEPTEMBER 18 PERMREPS LUNCH. HE REMARKED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE PREVIOUS PERMREP LUNCHEON AND IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL ON THIS TOPIC HAD BEEN SOMETHING OF A MOCKERY IN VIEW OF THE ALMOST COMPLETE REVELATION OF THE UNITED STATES' POSITION WHICH HAD APPEARED IN THE HERALD TRIBUNE AND IN OTHER U.S. NEWSPAPERS. DEPUTY SYG PANSAGREED, CONFIDENTIAL

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ADDING THAT THE STORIES SEEMED TO HAVE EMANATED ENTIRELY FROM SOURCES IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THERE HAD EVEN BEEN A DISCUSSION IN THE PRESS OF THE VERY DELICATE MATTER OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS. PANSAGREED SAID THAT THERE WAS NOW

AN URGENT NEED FOR DISCUSSION IN THE COUNCIL OF THE ENTIRE ISSUE OF PRESS HANDLING. ALTHOUGH SENIOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE WAS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS THE MATTER ON SEPTEMBER 19, PANSA FELT CERTAIN THAT SYG LUNS WOULD WISH TO RAISE THE MATTER FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION SEPTEMBER 19. FRG PERMREP KRAH CONCURRED.

2. UK PERMREP PECK ALSO NOTED THAT THESE DAMAGING PRESS LEAKS HAD EMANATED FROM WHAT APPERARED TO BE AN AUTHORITATIVE WELL-INFORMED GOVERNMENT SOURCE IN THE UNITED STATES, WHICH MADE THE MATTER ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS ON THIS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. PECK SAID THAT THE ALLIES HAD KEPT GOOD FAITH ON THE SENSITIVE SLAT NEGOTIATIONS WHICH NOW MADE IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO KEEP SILENT IN THE FACE OF INSISTENT PRESS INQUIRIES FORM THEIR OWN PRESS CORRESPONDENTS. HE SUGGESTED TWO WAYS OF REPAIRING THE DAMAGE THAT HAD BEEN DONE TO THE ALLIANCE. FIRST, RATHER FRIVOLOUSLY, HE PROPOSED THAT ALLIED GOVERNMENTS ARRANGE TO LEAK DIFFERENT SETS OF NUMBERS; FOR EXAMPLE, 600,000, 800,000, 900,000, AND VARIOUS PERCENTAGES, IN ORDER TO KEEP THE RUSSIANS GUESSING. MORE SERIOUSLY, HE SUGGESTED THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THIS PRESS LEAK IT SEEMED ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THE ALLIES TABLE THEIR PROPOSAL TO THE SOVIETS VERY LATE IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS.

3. DANISH PERMREP SVART, WHOSE LAST POST WAS MOSCOW, NOTED THAT SOVIETS, WHO HAVE A RATHER DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE PRESS, WOULD BE INCLINED TO DISCOUNT TO A VERY LARGE DEGREE ANYTHING WHICH THE READ IN AN AMERICAN OR OTHER WESTERN NEWSPAPER.

4. ITALIAN AND CANADIAN PERMREPS CATALANO AND MENZIES BOTH OBSERVED THAT SECDEF SCHLESINGER HAD TESTIFIED LAST WEEK BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. THEY INQUIRED WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION HAD BEGUN TO BRIEF THE CONGRESS AND WHETHER THE LEAK COULD HAVE POSSIBLY ORIGINED ON CAPITOL HILL. MCAULIFFE (U.S.) SAID HE WAS UNINFORMED AND UNINSTRUCTED ON THIS POINT. HE THEN READ ALOUD PARAGRAPH 2 CONFIDENTIAL

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OF STATE 181638 (PRESS GUIDANCE). HE ALSO ADVISED THE PERMREPS THAT THE U.S. DELEGATION HAD ALREADY CIRCULATED TO EACH OF THEM THE TEXT OF THE REMARKS WHICH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAD MADE ON SEPTEMBER 13 WHEN HE REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE TOTH ARTICLE (PARA 4, STATE 184012). DE STAERCKE, KRAH, AND GREEK AND TURKISH AMBASSADORS CHORAFAS AND ERALP SAID THE SCHLESINGER STATEMENT WAS HELPFUL.

5. NETHERLAND ACTING PERMREP BUWALDA CITED THE TOTH ARTICLE AND NOTED THAT IT CONTAINED THE IMPLICATION THAT THE UNITED STATES SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE A FURTHER 15 PERCENT REDUCTION OF TROOPS STATIONED IN EUROPE IN ANY POSSIBLE SECOND PHASE OF MBFR. IF HIS COMPUTATIONS WERE

CORRECT, THE U.S. APPEARED TO BE SEEKING TO WITHDRAW 29,500 MEN IN THE FIRST PHASE AND PERHAPS AN ADDITIONAL 25,000 IN THE SECOND PHASE. HE SAID THIS WOULD POSE GREAT DIFFICULTIES FOR EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. DE STAERCKE REMARKED THAT, ALTHOUGH PRESS LEAKS WERE HARMFUL TO THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE, THEY MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN DISCLOSING THE LONG-TERM POLICY OF THE USG. MCAULIFFE SAID THAT U.S. PLICY WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST PHASE HAD ALREADY BEEN FIRMLY AND CLEARLY STATED IN THE NAC AND IN THE SPC; THAT WITH RESPECT TO THE SECOND PHASE THE U.S. HAD MADE NO FIRM DETERMINATIONS AND THAT IT CONSIDERED THE TIME INAPPROPRIATE TO BEGIN A DISCUSSION OF SUCH MATTERS LEST THE VERY DISCUSSION DIMINISH THE ALLED DEFENSE EFFORT AND LESSEN POLITICAL COHERSION.

6. PECK SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO DISCUSSING MBFR INFORMATION POLICY IN THE NAC ON SEPTEMBER 19. HMG WANTED A CAREFULLY COORDINATED POLICY IN THIS REGARD. THE UK NOW INCLINED TO THE VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SINGLE ALLIED PRESS SPOKESMAN IN VIENNA, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO ROTATION, AND THAT THE INDIVIDUAL HOLDING THAT JOB SHOULD BE AND AMERICAN.  
RUMSFELD

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 02 APR 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** boyleja  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973NATO04390  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 GDS, 12-31-97  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** NATO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730962/abqceccck.tel  
**Line Count:** 132  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** n/a  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** (A) USNATO 4262, (B) STATE 181638, (C) STATE 184012  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** boyleja  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 AUG 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21-Aug-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <24-Sep-2001 by boyleja>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MBFR INFORMATION POLICY AND PRESS LEAKS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PARM, NATO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005